

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings and versions of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 8, 15 and 21 as follows.

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for facilitating authentication of a mobile station to communicate in a communication system, wherein the [[A]] communication system comprising includes network part including at least a plurality of [[first]] access network ~~portion~~ portions and a core network portion, the at least first plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions being coupled to the core network portion, a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions, at least one mobile station being operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the at least first plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, ~~the apparatus for facilitating authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, said apparatus including~~ comprising:

an identifier coupled to the mobile station and the core network portion to receive an authentication request requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with the selected authenticator, said identifier being used for identifying

indicia associated with the selected authenticator, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator, said identifier being formed of a proxy located at the ~~at least first access~~ selected network portion.

2. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator is coupled to the core access network, the selected authenticator having an address associated therewith, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator comprises address indicia representative of the address associated with the selected authenticator.

3. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier and used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected authentication method.

4. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising at least a second access network, wherein a first authenticator, coupled to the core network portion, is associated with the first access network portion and at least a second authenticator, also coupled to the core network portion, is associated with the at least second access network portion, and wherein the indicia identified by said identifier

identifies which of the first and the least second authenticators to which the authentication request is to be delivered.

5. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the indicia identifying to which of the first and at least second authenticators that the authentication request is to be delivered to is identified by said identifier responsive to identification through either the first or at least second access network portions through which the authentication request is made.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 21, wherein the communication system utilizes a text-based signaling protocol scheme, and wherein the request message generated by said request message forwarder comprises a text-based signaling protocol message.

9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the request message generated by said request message forwarder comprises an indicia field, the indicia field populated with values identified by said identifier to be associated with the authenticator.

10. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an address associated with the selected authenticator.

11. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the values identified by said identifier and populated in the indicia field comprise values representative of an authentication scheme pursuant to which the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station.

12. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said identifier is positioned at the mobile station.

13. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to originate a communication session there from and wherein said identifier identifies the indicia pursuant to origination by the mobile station of the communication station.

14. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile station is operable to initiate a registration procedure and wherein said identifier identifies the indicia pursuant to the registration procedure initiated by the mobile station.

15. (Currently amended) A method of communicating in a communication system having a network part including ~~at least~~ plurality of a ~~first access network portion~~

portions and a core network portion, the ~~at least first~~ plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions being coupled to the core network portion, a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions, and the communication system having a mobile station operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the ~~at least first~~ plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, the method of

facilitating authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, comprising the steps of:

detecting generation of an authentication request requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with the selected authenticator; and

identifying indicia associated with the selected authenticator, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator, said step of identifying being performed by a proxy located at the ~~at least first~~ selected access network portion.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the indicia associated with the selected authenticator and identified during said operation of identifying comprises indicia representative of address indicia associated with the selected authenticator.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the selected authenticator authenticates the mobile station through effectuation of a selected authentication method, and wherein the indicia associated with the selected authenticator identified during said operation of identifying comprises authentication-method indicia representative of the selected authentication method.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation of forwarding a request message representative of the authentication request, the request message including the indicia associated with the authenticator.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the request message forwarded during said operation of forwarding comprises a signaling protocol message containing an indicia field containing values representative of the indicia identified during said operation of identifying.

21. (Currently amended) A communication system comprising a network part including ~~at least a first~~ plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions and a core network portion, the ~~at least first~~ plurality of access network ~~portion~~ portions being coupled to the core network portion, a plurality of authenticators coupled to the core network portion, each authenticator being associated with one of the plurality of access network portions,

at least one mobile station operable to communicate by way of at least one selected access network portion of the ~~at least first plurality of~~ access network ~~portion~~ portions once authenticated through interaction with a selected authenticator associated with the selected access network portion, an apparatus for facilitating authentication of the mobile station to communicate in the communication system, said apparatus including

an identifier coupled to the mobile station and the core network portion to receive an authentication request requesting authentication by the mobile station through interaction with the selected authenticator, said identifier for identifying indicia associated with the selected authenticator, the indicia being used to facilitate delivery of the authentication request to the selected authenticator, said identifier being formed of a proxy located at the ~~at least first~~ selected access network portion, wherein said proxy of which said identifier is formed comprises an authentication request detector and a request message forwarder, said authentication request detector detecting the authentication request and said request message forwarder forwarding a request message representative of the authentication request, the request message including the indicia associated with the selected authenticator.